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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001672

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGGERFO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#)  
SUBJECT: ABU MAZEN AND GOVERNMENT AT ODDS ABOUT "NEW"  
SECURITY FORCE

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1622

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1644

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) The ongoing dispute between the PA President and government regarding the formation of a "new" security force sheds light on tensions regarding security relationships and attempts by Hamas to promote law and order in Gaza. Hamas appears to be looking for a way to use its military wing, the Izzidine al-Qassam Brigades, in an internal security role apart from their regular "resistance" duties. Hamas and Fatah continue to battle about the force in the media. The attack (reportedly by Fatah supporters) on the Health Ministry in Gaza on April 23, which was reportedly broken up by Hamas militiamen who helped turn over the attackers to the Palestinian police, could rebound in the favor of Hamas.

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Status of the Force  
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[1](#)2. (C) Damascus-based Hamas political bureau chief Khalid Meshaal took issue with the decision by President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to oppose the creation of a new security force in a significant speech delivered in a Palestinian refugee camp outside Damascus on April 21 (Abu Mazen decision ref (a)/Meshaal speech ref (b)). Meshaal said that Abu Mazen's cancellation of Interior Minister Sa'ed Siyyam's decision to stand up the force was "a decision that is intended to further security chaos," implicitly blaming the President.

[1](#)3. (C) Interior Minister Siyyam told "al-Jazeera" on April 22 that the creation of a new security force is within the Interior Minister's powers. He described the force as "part of the Palestinian security force, and not a new force. This force falls automatically under the Palestinian police force."

[1](#)4. (C) Interior Minister spokesman Khalid Abu Hilal told Dubai media sources that the Ministry had yet to receive a cancellation decree from Abu Mazen, that the MOI had not really formed a new service, and that all such matters are within the purview of the Interior Minister. Hamas government spokesman Ghazi Hamad similarly defended the unit, claimed it was formed in accordance with the law, and linked it to a previous "popular army" formed in the past (Note: presumably referring to the additional security forces stood

up in 2005 by then-Interior Minister Nasser Youssef. End note.), saying that "no objections were made against that army by the leaders of the Palestinian Authority."

15. (C) The President's office continued its hard line against the new force, with Presidential Advisor Ahmad Abd al-Rahman calling the force's creation illegal. Fatah West Bank leader Husayn al-Sheikh emphasized to a local news agency the creation of the "Special Force" was against the law and is an attempt to legalize "certain phenomena in the Palestinian street," presumably referring to Hamas attempts to bring the Izzidine al-Qassam Brigades into a governmental role.

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Attack on the Health Ministry  
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16. (C) On April 23, in the midst of ongoing discussions regarding a ratcheting down of recent tensions (ref (b)), a group of gunmen broke into the Gaza office of (Hamas) Health Minister Basim Na'im. The gunmen were reportedly reacting to statements Na'im made on April 22, that - as an austerity measure - the Hamas government would cease providing payments for medical patients seeking treatment outside Palestinian areas. Gunmen related to medical patients reacted by besieging the governmental office, seeking assurances that the Ministry or the PA would somehow compensate them. In this incident, Na'im and his security staff called for support from Hamas militiamen - the type of forces who would presumably participate in the new security force. The Hamas gunmen reportedly took control of the situation and turned over the attackers to the Palestinian police.

17. (C) The incident, and its resolution, appear to be playing directly into the hands of Hamas. Interior Ministry spokesman Abu Hilal quickly reached out to the media, saying

that the MOI was declaring an "intifada against lawlessness." He clearly connected the new security force with these types of incidents, and declared "the days of the weapons chaos are over ... any villain that would attack PA institutions will be shot at and apprehended for being a criminal."

WALLES